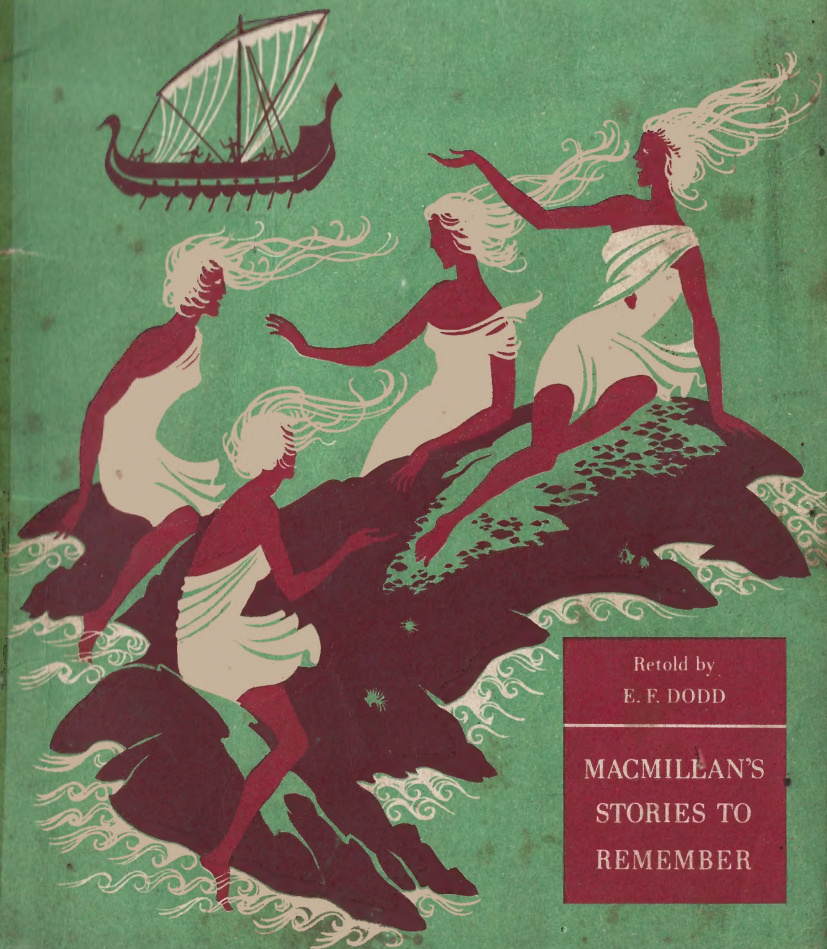


# *Stories from* **HOMER**



Retold by  
E. F. DODD

MACMILLAN'S  
STORIES TO  
REMEMBER



*MACMILLAN'S*  
*STORIES TO REMEMBER*

STORIES FROM HOMER

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# STORIES FROM HOMER

*Told by*  
E. F. DODD, B.A



MACMILLAN

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## PREFACE

This book is intended for use as a supplementary reader in High Schools and Secondary Schools particularly where English is taught as a second language. These stories from Homer are retold within a vocabulary of two thousand words, and every care has been taken to avoid difficult sentence structures.

E. F. D.

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

This will be found to be quite easy if each syllable is pronounced as it is written, with the emphasis on the last syllable but one. Thus:—

*A-ga-mem-non*

*Aph-ro-di-te*

*A-the-ne*

*Di-o-me-des*

*Me-ne-la-us*

It should also be remembered that *ch* sounds like *k*, and therefore *Achilles* is pronounced *A-kil-les*, and *Charybdis* *Ka-ryb-dis*.

E. F. D.

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## PART I—THE SIEGE OF TROY

### CHAPTER 1

#### THE THEFT OF HELEN

THOUSANDS of years ago there lived in Sparta, a town of Greece, a king called Tyndareus. He and his wife, Leda, had four children: two sons called Castor and Polydeuces, and two daughters, Clytemnestra and Helen. Clytemnestra had married Agamemnon, the son of the king of Mycenae, but Helen, the younger daughter, was not yet married. She was the most beautiful woman who had ever lived, and every prince who saw her wanted to marry her; but they all loved her so jealously that each man swore to kill her and her husband and all her family, if she married anyone but him. Finally, King Tyndareus told all the princes that Helen must be allowed to choose her own husband, and he made them promise that they would all support her choice, and help her husband to win back Helen if any man robbed him of her. Helen chose Menelaus, the brother of Agamemnon; and when they were married, Tyndareus, who was now an old man, gave up his kingdom to his son-in-law, and Menelaus and his wife reigned in Sparta.

Far away across the Aegean sea was the city of Troy, whose king was rich and powerful. His name was Priam, and his eldest son was called Hector. Just before their second son was born, Priam's wife, Hecuba, dreamed that she had brought into the world a flaming torch which would set fire to the city of Troy. When the baby was born, they were afraid that he would bring misfortune to them all, but they had not the heart to kill him. Priam took the baby out of the city and left him on Mount Ida. A shepherd found him there and brought him up as his own child, giving him the name of Paris. And so the boy lived a simple shepherd's life, not knowing that he was a prince, and the son of King Priam of Troy.

When Paris had grown into a tall and beautiful young man, a marriage took place between Peleus, the King of the Myrmidons, and Thetis, a sea-goddess. All the gods of Olympus came to their marriage, including Zeus, the father of the gods, and Hera his wife, Athene, the goddess of Wisdom, and Aphrodite, the goddess of Love and Beauty. But Eris, the goddess of War, had not been invited, and she was so angry that she came and threw a golden apple on the table where the guests were sitting at the marriage feast. On the apple was written 'for the most beautiful woman.' Hera, Athene and Aphrodite all claimed the apple and began to quarrel over it, and at last Father Zeus, wishing

to put an end to the argument, told Iris, the messenger of the gods, to take the apple to Paris, the shepherd of Mount Ida. 'Tell Paris to give the apple to the goddess whom he thinks the most beautiful,' Zeus said.

And so, while Paris was watching his sheep on the hillside that afternoon, the three goddesses appeared before him. Hera, the queen of the gods, spoke first. 'Give me the apple, Paris,' she said. 'You are already a king's son, although you do not know it, and I will make you the richest and most powerful king in all the world.'

Paris almost gave the apple to Hera, but he decided to wait until Athene spoke. She said: 'I will teach you to become the wisest and the most famous of all men. You shall be great and good, loved and admired by all.'

Then Paris felt that it would be best for him to give the apple to Athene, but at that moment Aphrodite stood smiling before him and said: 'I will give you the most beautiful woman on earth to be your wife.'

And without any hesitation, Paris gave Aphrodite the apple.

After this, Paris found that he was no longer content to live the peaceful life of a shepherd. Hera had told him who his parents were, and he went to Troy. Here he made himself known to his father, Priam, and his mother, Hecuba. They



Without any hesitation, Paris gave Aphrodite the apple

had thought that he was dead, and they welcomed him to his home and there were great rejoicings in the city. He and his brothers cut down trees on Mount Ida and ships were built for them, so that they could sail the seas to other lands in search of the beautiful wife whom Aphrodite had promised Paris. His sister Cassandra begged Paris not to go, warning him that it would bring trouble and sorrow to all the Trojans; but Paris only laughed at her fears, and sailed across the blue sea until he came to Sparta.

When Menelaus, the king of Sparta, heard that Paris had arrived, he went down to the seashore to welcome him. He told him to anchor the ships on the beach and come with him as his guest.

Paris went with Menelaus to his palace, and there he met Helen, Menelaus's wife. As soon as he saw her, he knew that it must be she whom Aphrodite had promised him for his wife, because Helen was the most beautiful woman on earth. Before long, Menelaus set off on a journey to Crete, and in his absence Paris made love to Helen. He persuaded her to bring all the treasure of Menelaus on board the Trojan ships, and to sail with him across the sea to Troy.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE GREEK HEROES REMEMBER THEIR PROMISE

THE goddesses Hera and Athene hated Paris because he had given the golden apple to Aphrodite. They sent Iris, the messenger of the gods, to Menelaus in Crete, telling him that Paris had carried off his wife. Menelaus sailed home in great haste, and found his house robbed and his wife gone. He had loved Helen very dearly, and, remembering how happy he had been with her, he felt that he must win her back or die. But when he thought of her wonderful beauty, he knew that Paris would never give her up unless he was forced to do so, and how could he force Paris to return her to Sparta? Troy was far away across the sea, and Priam was a strong and powerful king. At last Menelaus decided to go to Mycenae to visit his

brother, Agamemnon, and ask for his advice and help.

When Menelaus arrived at the palace at Mycenae, he found his brother talking to Nestor, the wise old man who was King of Pylos. Nestor knew Helen well, and he was filled with pity for Menelaus. He said that he would go at once to all the princes who had loved Helen, and ask them to remember the promise they had made to her father. Hera and Athene, because of their hatred of Paris, stirred the hearts of all the princes, and they agreed to come with ships and men, and help Menelaus to win Helen back.

The great army gathered at Aulis on the seashore, and Agamemnon's heart was filled with pride when he saw the endless ranks of men pouring out from their ships and tents. All the princes were there, including old Nestor and his two brave sons, and Achilles, the King of the Myrmidons, the bravest hero of them all. Achilles was the son of Peleus and the sea-goddess, Thetis, and many strange tales were told about him. It was said that Thetis, knowing that he was fated to be killed in battle when he was still a young man, carried him, when he was a baby, to the River Styx, the great river of the Underworld. She took him by his left heel and held him in the river, and as the water flowed over his body it made him immortal. No human weapon could kill him, except



She took him by his left heel and held him in the river  
on his left heel where his mother's hand had  
held him.

The men of Ithaca were led by Odysseus, their wise king. It was said that Odysseus did not want to leave his newly married wife, Penelope, and sail over the sea to fight against the Trojans, so he pretended to be mad, and ploughed the sea-sand with a pair of oxen. But one of the princes suspected him, and he took Telemachus, the baby son of Odysseus, and laid him in front of the plough. Odysseus would not kill his own child, and he stopped the oxen. Then the princes knew he was not really mad, and they forced him to join the army at Aulis.

When the army was ready, the ships set sail for Troy. The Greeks reached the island of Tenedos, and here they agreed to wait, while Menelaus went to Troy to ask the Trojans to give back Helen and the stolen treasure. Menelaus took Odysseus with him, because he was the wisest and the cleverest of the Greeks.

When Odysseus and Menelaus came to Troy, Antenor, a noble Trojan, welcomed them and told them that both he and King Priam wished to return Helen to Menelaus, but that Paris would not give her up. In vain Menelaus begged for his wife, and Odysseus tried to charm the Trojans with soft words and clever speeches. Paris, and all the young men who had sailed with him to Sparta, became so angry with the two kings that they would have killed them both if the elders had not held them back. So Odysseus and Menelaus returned to the Greeks at Tenedos, and gave up all hope of winning back Helen unless they could capture Troy.

Meanwhile, the Trojans had not been idle. When they heard of the great army which was coming against them, they called upon all the neighbouring princes to help them. There was Hector, the eldest and bravest of the sons of Priam, and his cousin, Aeneas, son of Anchises and the goddess Aphrodite; there was the giant, Cycnus, son of the sea-god, Poseidon, and many others besides. They came from Thrace in the far north, and Lycia in



the south. The Lycians were led by their king, Sarpedon, a son of Zeus himself. Messengers had also been sent to King Memnon, the King of Ethiopia, to beg him to come and help the Trojans, but Memnon lived far away, and it was not yet known whether he would come at all.

When the Greeks landed on the mainland, they found all the Trojan army drawn up to fight them, and a great and terrible battle began. Hector and Cycnus cut down the Greeks as if they had been corn, until Achilles, driving his carriage along the Trojan line, caught sight of the great Cycnus and attacked him. His spear, however, could not wound the giant, for Cycnus was the son of a god and was protected against all human weapons. Many times Achilles struck at Cycnus with his spear, but he could not wound him nor draw any blood from his skin. At last Achilles grew mad with rage. He threw aside his spear and his sword, and attacked the giant with his bare hands. He tore off his enemy's helmet and crushed his throat between his fingers until he choked and died.

But the sea-god, Poseidon, was watching over his son. When Achilles turned to lift Cycnus's body into his carriage, he saw that only the giant's armour lay upon the ground. Cycnus was gone, and Achilles saw only a wild swan flying through the clear blue sky. And even to this day the Greeks call a swan 'Cycnus.'

## CHAPTER 3

### THE QUARREL OF ACHILLES

THE bravery of Achilles in this battle filled the Trojans with fear, and they no longer dared to leave the shelter of their walls and fight in the open plain. The Greeks, advised by the wise Odysseus, dug a deep ditch, and built a wall with five gates in it, reaching all round their camp and ships. Meanwhile, the Greeks attacked other cities in Troyland. Achilles captured the town of Lyrnessus, and carried off a beautiful girl named Briseis, whom he married. Agamemnon also captured a lovely girl, Chryseis, the daughter of Chryses, a priest of Apollo. When the priest heard of this, he was filled with sorrow and came to Agamemnon, offering him all his possessions in exchange for his daughter. But Agamemnon would not give her up, and spoke angrily to the old man, telling him to leave the Greek camp at once. Poor Chryses went away with his eyes full of tears, and when he was out of sight of the Greek camp he lifted up his hands to heaven and prayed to Apollo to help him. The sun-god listened to his prayer, and sent a great sickness to the Greek camp, so that their horses and cattle died daily. For nine days the sickness raged among them, and on the tenth day Achilles called the Greeks together and

asked what was to be done. A wise man, Calchas, rose and said: 'Achilles, if you will promise to protect me, I will tell you why Apollo is angry with us and has sent this sickness upon us. But unless you promise, I dare not speak, because my words will anger one of our great men.'

Achilles promised that no one should harm Calchas, and the wise man said: 'Apollo is angry because Agamemnon has been cruel to Chryses, his priest. The god will not forgive us until Agamemnon returns the girl, Chryseis, to her father, and offers a sacrifice of a hundred oxen to Apollo to wash away his sin.'

On hearing these words, Agamemnon rose in great anger and shouted: 'If I must, I will give up the beautiful Chryseis, but I must have another in her place. It is not right that I alone of all the Greeks should have no prize.'

Achilles answered him: 'Greedy king, where can the Greeks get another prize for you? We have already shared all that we have taken from the captured cities, and we cannot ask our men to give it back again. Put your trust in heaven, and when we take the city of Troy we will repay you many times.'

But Agamemnon replied angrily: 'Brave Achilles, do not deceive yourself in this way, or think that I will go without a prize while you keep yours. If the Greeks choose to give me some other maiden

for a present, to make up for the loss of Chryseis, all well and good. But if they do not, I will come and take one myself, either yours or someone else's.'

Achilles cried: 'You are shameless! How can you hope that the Greeks will follow such a man as you? *I* have no quarrel with the Trojans; they did not steal my treasure or my wife. It was for you and Menelaus that I came to fight, and now you have forgotten this and want to take away my prize, the maiden whom I fought hard to win. It is always so. When we attack some Trojan town, it is I who lead the army into battle, but when we divide the captured treasure, you always take the largest share. It will be best for me to sail home again, and leave you here to win what glory you can without me.'

'Run away home,' answered Agamemnon. 'I shall not beg you to stay! I know that you are powerful and safe from all human weapons, but it was the gods who made you so. I care nothing for your anger. If Apollo demands it, I will send Chryseis to her home again, but I will come and take away your prize, the beautiful Briseis. In this way you will know that I am more powerful than you.'

Achilles was now so angry that he laid his hand upon his sword. But as he was drawing it from its sheath, the goddess Athene came and stood behind him. She laid her hand upon his golden



The goddess Athene came and stood behind him

hair, and at once Achilles turned and knew her. 'Goddess Athene, why are you here?' he asked.

Athene answered: 'I have come to calm your anger, if you will obey me. Hera has sent me, for she loves both you and Agamemnon. Put back your sword in its sheath, and quarrel no more. Agamemnon shall be punished for this insult if you will do as we command.'

Achilles said: 'I cannot fight against the gods,' and put his sword back in its sheath. Athene returned to the sacred hill of Olympus, and Achilles turned and spoke to Agamemnon.

‘Briseis is my wife,’ he said, ‘but as you gave her to me I suppose you may take her back. But if you lay your hands on anything else of mine, either in my tent or on my ship, you shall die upon my sword. And by that sword I swear that, before long, you and all the Greeks will regret the day when you insulted the bravest soldier of you all.’ Without a backward glance he turned and left the camp.

Agamemnon sent Chryseis back to her father, with a hundred oxen as a sacrifice to Apollo. Achilles let Briseis go, but sorrowed deeply for her, and swore that neither he nor his Myrmidons would fight any more for Agamemnon. For a long time after Briseis was taken from him, Achilles sat alone by the seashore, and then he remembered his goddess mother, Thetis, and called aloud to her.

‘Mother, I know that I must die in my youth,’ he cried. ‘I had hoped to win honour and fame in my short life, but now Agamemnon has insulted me and taken away my prize.’

Thetis heard him as she sat in her palace far beneath the waves. She rose out of the sea and stood beside him, listening to his story. Then she comforted him and told him to be of good cheer. She herself would beg Father Zeus to give the victory to the Trojans, at least until the Greeks were punished for the wrong they had done to Achilles.

So Achilles was comforted, and returned quietly to his ship.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARIS FIGHTS MENELAUS

IN answer to the prayer of Thetis, Zeus sent a dream to Agamemnon, falsely telling him to lead out the Greeks to battle before the walls of Troy.

The next morning Agamemnon called the princes and told them what he had dreamed. But they were not all of them anxious to continue the war, and one of the princes, an ugly man called Thersites, cried out: 'What more do you want, Agamemnon? Your tents are full of precious metals, beautiful women slaves, and treasure. What more do you want?' He turned to the other leaders and said, 'Why do we not sail home in our ships, and leave this greedy king here alone? He has already insulted Achilles, our bravest soldier.'

At once Odysseus stood up and said: 'You stupid fool, be silent! What right have you to speak like this to Agamemnon, our king and leader?' As he spoke, Odysseus struck Thersites a hard blow across the shoulders, and the ugly man sat down hastily and began to wipe away the tears which filled his eyes. The other Greeks laughed at Thersites, and Odysseus, in his turn, made a speech to them. He reminded them how shameful it would be if they broke their promise to Tyndareus, Helen's father.

It was hard, Odysseus agreed, to stay year after year away from their homes, but it would be worse to go home empty-handed. 'Let us endure for a little longer,' he said, 'and swear not to leave here until Priam's rich city is conquered.'

At these words all the leaders clapped their hands, and said that Odysseus had spoken well. Agamemnon now told the Greeks to have their breakfast, and advised each man to sharpen his spear and examine his armour well, as he meant to fight with the Trojans that very day.

While the Greeks were leading out their army, King Priam sat with some of his old friends on the tower near one of the gates of Troy, watching the Greeks march out into the plain below. Priam saw Helen walking towards the walls and he called her to him. The other old men said softly to each other: 'Indeed, it is no shame for the Trojans and the Greeks to be fighting for such a lady as this. She is as beautiful as a goddess. But in spite of her beauty, it would be better for her to return to Greece, for she will bring ruin upon us and upon our children.'

But Priam said to Helen: 'Come here, dear child, and sit beside me. I do not blame you as the cause of the war. It is the wish of the gods, and we must follow their plan for us. But now tell me, who is that powerful prince over there? He looks a great and noble soldier.'



Helen looked in the direction where he was pointing, and answered: 'Dear father-in-law, I feel ashamed to be here. I wish that I had died before I came here with your son, leaving my husband and my little daughter, and all the friends of my youth. But the gods wished it, and so I must not weep. Now, as for what you ask me, that is Agamemnon, a great king and a brave soldier. He was once my brother-in-law.'

Then Priam said: 'Now tell me, dear child, who is that other leader, over there? He is not as tall as Agamemnon, but his shoulders are broader. Do you see who I mean? He has not yet put on his armour, but is walking among his men, cheering them on and giving them advice.'

Helen replied: 'Yes, that is Odysseus, the wisest of the Greeks. He is the king of Ithaca.' And as she spoke, she had tears in her eyes, thinking of all the trouble and sorrow she had brought to her own people and to the people of Troy.

When the armies met on the plain, the Trojans attacked with wild shouts and cries, but the Greeks marched in silence. Leading the Trojans, in splendid armour, was Paris, with his bow hung across his shoulders and his sword by his side. As soon as Menelaus caught sight of Paris, he was filled with a fierce joy, thinking that the hour of his revenge had come. He sprang from his carriage and rushed towards Paris, but when Paris

saw Menelaus he was afraid, and tried to hide himself behind his companions. His brother, Hector, spoke to him angrily.

‘Miserable man!’ Hector cried. ‘How I wish that you had never been born! You will bring shame upon us all, and the Greeks will laugh at you and call you a coward. I do not know how you managed to persuade brave men to follow you across the sea to steal another’s wife. You have brought endless sorrow upon your father, your city, and your friends; and now your enemies laugh at you, and you are covered with shame.’

Paris was indeed ashamed, and he answered: ‘Hector, you are right. I cannot always be as brave as you—but if you wish me to fight, tell the Trojans and the Greeks to sit down upon the ground, and I will fight Menelaus face to face. Whichever of us wins the fight shall take Helen and lead her home in triumph. In this way the Trojans can live in peace, and the Greeks shall return to their own homes.’

Hector was overjoyed at these words. He at once called for a truce, and in the open space between the two armies, King Priam and Agamemnon arranged the conditions for the fight. Priam brought two lambs as a sacrifice to the gods, and Agamemnon drew his sword and cried: ‘If Paris kills Menelaus, then Paris shall keep Helen and all the Greeks will return to their homes

in peace. But if Paris is killed, then shall Menelaus have Helen; and if the Trojans refuse to pay the debt, I swear by all the gods that the Greeks will stay and fight until every Trojan is killed and the city of Troy is burned to the ground.'

Then, with his sword Agamemnon cut the throats of the lambs, and all the listening soldiers prayed to Father Zeus. And Priam returned to his carriage and drove away to Troy, for he could not bear to stay and see his beloved son meet fierce Menelaus in battle.

Now Hector and Odysseus measured out the ground, and Paris and Menelaus armed themselves for the fight. First Paris threw his spear. Menelaus caught it upon his shield and the point was turned away and did not touch him. Next Menelaus, with a prayer to Zeus, threw his spear at Paris and it passed right through his shield; but it only touched his side and made no wound.

Menelaus now drew his sword and struck Paris upon his helmet. The sword broke in his hand, and Menelaus seized Paris by the horsehair plume of his helmet and dragged him along towards the Greeks. The strap of the helmet, by which it was fastened under his chin, would have choked Paris and Menelaus would have won the fight; but Aphrodite caused the strap to break, and saved her favourite from death. Hidden in a cloud, she



Hidden in a cloud, she carried him away to Troy

carried him away to Troy, where, in the arms of Helen, he comforted himself for his defeat.

Meanwhile Menelaus rushed angrily among the crowd, looking everywhere for Paris. Of course, none of the Trojans could point him out because he was not there. They would not willingly have protected him, because they all hated him for the troubles he had brought upon them.

At last great Agamemnon spoke to the Trojans.

‘Menelaus is the victor,’ he cried. ‘Therefore give us Helen and the treasure, as has been promised.’ And all the Greeks cheered his words.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE TRUCE IS BROKEN

MEANWHILE Athene, wishing to cause trouble for the Trojans by making them break off the truce, disguised herself as Laodocus, a son of Antenor. She went quickly to one of the archers and said: 'If you will shoot an arrow and kill Menelaus, your fame will be great and Paris will give you a splendid reward.'

The foolish archer listened to her words, and at once fitted an arrow to the string of his bow and shot it at Menelaus. The arrow struck him in the side and the dark blood began to flow. The wound was not deep and Menelaus was not killed, but at the sight of the blood Agamemnon cried out in bitter anger: 'The Trojans have foully broken the truce! They shall pay the penalty for this!' And he called to the Greek princes to lead their men into battle again.

Like great waves dashing against a rocky shore, the Greeks rolled unceasingly onward against the armies of Troy. Terrible was the noise of battle and the cries of the wounded, while beneath their feet the plain of Troy ran red with blood.

At last the gods, sorrowing at so much bloodshed, advised Hector to call for another truce and challenge some Greek to single fight. When both



Terrible was the noise of battle

sides were seated on the ground, Hector called out: 'Listen, Trojans and Greeks. It did not please the gods to let us keep our last truce. But now, as all the leaders of the Greeks are here, let one of them come forward and fight with me alone.'

For a time all the Greeks sat silent, fearing to meet so fierce a fighter alone. Menelaus would have fought him, in spite of his wound, but his brother Agamemnon held him back. At last the great Ajax came forward, and all the Trojans whispered fearfully together when they saw his huge size and broad shoulders. Even Hector's brave heart beat more quickly, but he knew there was no escape for him, the challenger.

‘Now, Hector,’ said Ajax, ‘you shall learn that there are still many brave men left in our army, even though Achilles fights for us no more.’

‘Do not try to frighten me!’ answered Hector proudly. ‘I am not a child or woman, unskilled in war. I shall kill you if I can, in open fight.’

He threw his long spear, but could not break the great sword of Ajax. Ajax, in his turn, threw his spear at Hector. The spear cut through his shield, but Hector avoided its point. All afternoon they fought, first with spears, then with swords, and at last with their bare hands, until evening came and it was too dark to see.

Then Hector said: ‘Ajax, you are brave and strong, and the best fighter of all the Greeks. Let us now stop fighting, for it is growing dark. I will go home to Troy and you return to your camp. Another day we will fight, until Zeus shall give one of us the victory. But let us, tonight, part good friends, and give presents to each other, so that all men will say: “They fought bravely in single fight, and then parted friends”.’

Then Hector gave Ajax a sword, and Ajax gave Hector a silver belt. And so they parted.

That night Agamemnon held a feast for Ajax in his tent, and praised him greatly for the brave deeds he had done; and the next morning the Greeks and the Trojans gathered up the bodies of their dead, and there was no fighting that day.

## CHAPTER 6

### PATROCLUS WEARS THE ARMOUR OF ACHILLES

THE following day Agamemnon once more led his army boldly out against the Trojans. No man that day had more glory than Agamemnon. He killed many a proud Trojan, and beat back their army, until at mid-day he was struck through the right hand by an enemy spear. For a time he fought on, but before long the pain of the wound forced him to return to the camp. Then Hector advanced.

Odysseus and Diomedes, two of the bravest Greeks, met Hector, and Diomedes struck him such a blow on the helmet that Hector turned faint and dizzy, and was forced to fall back for a while: but Paris shot Diomedes in the ankle, and he too had to leave the battle. So Odysseus was left alone, and the Trojans gathered round him and one of them wounded him in his side. Odysseus continued to fight, but, wounded and alone, he would soon have been killed if he had not shouted aloud for help. Ajax and Menelaus heard his cry, and came up and rescued him.

And now, as most of their leaders were wounded, the Greeks turned and fled back to their camp, pursued by the cheering Trojans.

From his tall ship, Achilles watched the fortune of the battle. He saw one leader after another



return wounded to the camp, and he said to his friend Patroclus: ' Before long the Greeks will kneel at my feet and beg for my help, for their need is great. But go quickly, Patroclus, and find out whom Nestor is bringing back wounded in his carriage. He looks like Machaon the doctor, but the horses galloped past me so fast that I could not see his face.'

Patroclus ran quickly to Nestor's tent, where he found the old man washing Machaon's wounds. When Nestor saw Patroclus he said bitterly: ' What does Achilles care if every Greek in the army is hurt? Does he not know that Diomedes, Odysseus, Agamemnon himself, have all been wounded, and now I have brought back Machaon, whom Paris shot with an arrow in the shoulder? How I wish I were young again: I would soon perform some brave deed! But go, Patroclus, and beg Achilles, if he will not come out himself, to lend you his armour. Perhaps the men of Troy will think you are the great Achilles, and they may be afraid. You and the Myrmidons, fresh and unwounded, might well drive them back.'

So Patroclus ran back to Achilles, while Nestor pulled out the arrow from Machaon's shoulder, washed the wound, and bound it tightly with clean white cloth.

Achilles himself refused to go and help the Greeks, remembering the wrong which Agamemnon



Achilles lent him his own armour

had done him; but Patroclus begged so hard to be allowed to help his friends that at last Achilles lent him his own armour, and told him to lead the Myrmidons to the rescue.

And so, dressed in the well-known armour of Achilles, glittering like the sun in his splendour, Patroclus led the brave Myrmidons into the thickest part of the fight. Just as the soft wind rolls away the dark mist which has gathered round a mountain, even so did Patroclus roll back the Trojan army from the Greek camp. The Trojans did not fly in terror, but fought bravely all the way. Patroclus and Menelaus each killed a Trojan leader, and Nestor's two sons laid low two

friends of Sarpedon, the King of Lycia and son of Zeus. Patroclus, driving the immortal horses of Achilles, met Sarpedon face to face. The two champions rushed together like two fierce eagles, and, after a short, bitter struggle, Patroclus killed Sarpedon with his spear. Zeus himself sorrowed for his beloved son. He looked down upon the battlefield and planned a punishment for Patroclus who had killed him.

Patroclus led the Myrmidons to the very walls of Troy, and it seemed as if no one would be able to stand before him and prevent him from entering the besieged city. But the time had not yet come for Troy to be captured, and the sun-god, Apollo, stood on the walls of Troy and prevented Patroclus from climbing the wall.

‘Go back, brave Patroclus!’ cried the sun-god. ‘Troy shall not be won by you, or even by Achilles, who is more powerful than you. The gods do not wish it.’

And so Patroclus retired again to the plain below the city.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE ARMOUR IS LOST

MEANWHILE Hector stood beside his carriage at the gate of Troy, wondering whether he should go and fight in the plain once more, or call back his army

to the shelter of the city walls. Apollo, dressed as one of Hector's own friends, went to him and told him to go out again. 'Attack Patroclus bravely,' he said, 'and perhaps Apollo may help you to win the battle.'

Hector at once drove out to meet Patroclus. Patroclus leaped to the ground, with his spear in his left hand. Hector also leaped from his carriage, and they fought each other, hand to hand. Patroclus fiercely pressed against his enemy, but death was near him. Apollo struck him, and his helmet fell to the ground. Never before had that proud helmet rolled in the mud, for, until that day, it had been worn by the unconquerable Achilles himself. Patroclus almost fell before the force of Apollo's blow, and Hector at once stepped forward and struck him to the ground.

In this manner did Patroclus, after all his brave deeds in battle, fall at last to Hector's spear. As he lay dying, Hector stood over him, saying: 'Patroclus, not long ago you boasted that you would capture our fine city and take our Trojan wives away as prisoners to Greece. But now you are dying. Achilles was unwise to send you out to fight with me!'

Patroclus replied faintly: 'Hector, it is now your turn to boast, for the gods have delivered me into your hands. I was not afraid to meet you in fair fight, but today Apollo struck me first. And I

warn you that you yourself will not live long, because Achilles will kill you before the gates of Troy.'

And so the brave young man died, and his soul flew sadly to the shadows of the Underworld. Hector took Achilles' armour off the body of Patroclus, and he would have seized the carriage as well, but Automedon drove away the immortal horses and took them back to Achilles.

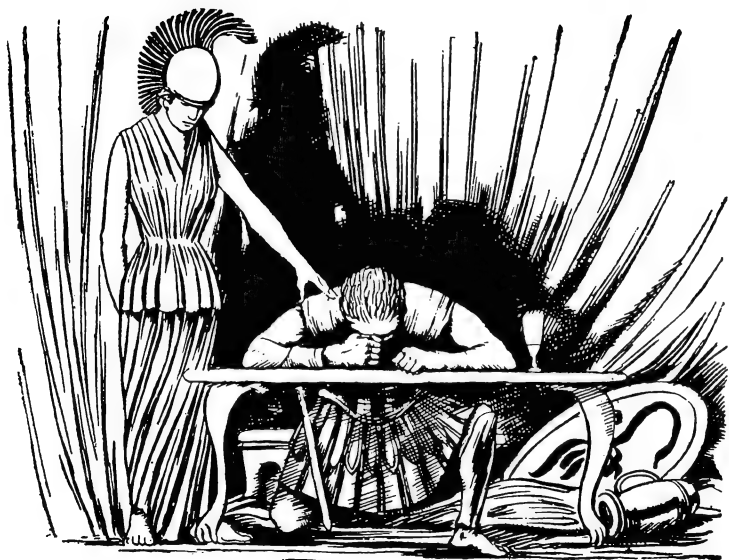
Menelaus saw the fall of Patroclus, and quickly ran up, calling the Greeks to help him in protecting the young man's bleeding body. Hector dropped the body of Patroclus and moved away. Glaucus angrily called him a coward, but Hector went back only a little way, removed his own armour, and put on that of Achilles—the glorious armour which the gods gave Peleus on his wedding day. Then Hector hurried back to the fight. They fought long and bravely, but such a hedge of spears now surrounded the dead body of Patroclus that no Trojan could reach where he lay. Backward and forward rocked the battle and each side fought hard, the Greeks hoping to bear away the body to their camp, the Trojans hoping to throw it to the dogs.

Meanwhile Achilles stood beside his ship, overlooking the battle. Full of anxious fear he said to himself: 'Why are the Greeks being driven back again in confusion to their camp? Heaven forbid that my brave Patroclus has been killed!'

At this moment one of his friends came up to him with his eyes full of tears, and said: 'Achilles, I bring you bad news. Patroclus has fallen and the Greeks are fighting hard for his naked body, for Hector has taken his armour.'

Achilles gave a loud and bitter cry. At this cry, his mother Thetis came to him and asked why he was sad, for surely the Greeks were suffering for their insult to him.

'True, mother,' replied Achilles, 'but what do I care for that, now that my dear friend Patroclus, whom I loved best of all my companions, has fallen?'



Thetis came to him and asked why he was sad

I have lost him and my armour, too. I shall never rest until Hector falls before my spear!

‘Ah, my child,’ said Thetis sadly, ‘if you kill Hector, you yourself will die soon afterwards.’

Then Achilles cried fiercely: ‘I wish that I could die now, since I could not save my friend. He lies dead on a foreign shore, and I did not help him or any of the other Greeks whom Hector has killed. O unhappy quarrel, which has forced me to sit here idle! But now I will forget the quarrel, and go out to war to kill Hector who has killed my beloved Patroclus.’

‘You are right to avenge your friend,’ Thetis answered. ‘But the Trojans have your armour and Hector wears it upon his shoulders. Wait for one day. Tomorrow I will return, and bring you noble armour made by the god Hephæstus himself, the clever worker of metals.’

And she went away, leaving Achilles sorrowing in his tent.

## CHAPTER 8

### HECTOR IS KILLED

ALL night long Achilles sorrowed for Patroclus, and the next morning Thetis came, bringing the promised armour. It flashed terribly in the light of the rising sun, and even the Myrmidons were

frightened at the sight. But Achilles was glad, for the armour reminded him of the work before him, the avenging of his friend. He walked on the sea-shore calling loudly to the Greeks, and they all came gladly when they heard his voice. Even the wounded leaders came: Odysseus and Diomedes, Menelaus and Agamemnon. Then Achilles said: 'Agamemnon, it is not right for us two to quarrel any longer. Let us forgive what is past and lay aside our pride. I am willing to forgive all that you have done, and now let us arm the Greeks for battle.'

Agamemnon answered: 'Heroes and friends, listen to my words. I must have been mad when I insulted Achilles. I have often sorrowed for my fault, and I have suffered deeply for it. Now I would be very glad to be his friend once more, and I will send costly presents and also Briseis herself to your tent, Achilles. After that we will make ready for battle.'

Achilles said: 'Agamemnon, I am your friend, and I thank you for your presents. And now let every man arm himself for the fight, and do as I do.'

When Achilles attacked the Trojans that day, the old songs say that the gods themselves came down from Olympus to take part in the battle. Achilles fought like a god himself, killing every Trojan whom he met; and no enemy weapon





Achilles fought like a god himself

could break his splendid shining shield. The Trojans ran away before him until they reached the banks of the river which surrounded Troy. Here some of them escaped him, while others jumped into the water and were carried away by the fast-moving stream.

Old King Priam stood on a high tower and watched the battle until he saw the Trojans give way before Achilles. Then he told the guards to open the city gates so that the retreating army might come in. Dry with thirst and covered with dust and blood, the breathless Trojans ran for the city, while Achilles and the Greeks followed closely.

The Trojans poured fast into the city, but Hector remained outside. In vain Priam begged him to save himself and enter the gate, for the old man saw the bright armour of Achilles shining in the distance, and he knew that Achilles was drawing nearer and nearer in his search for Hector.

‘Hector, my best loved son,’ the old king cried, ‘do not wait alone for Achilles. Have pity on my sorrow, and enter the gate!’

But Hector, leaning his shield against the city wall, stood firm, waiting for the coming of Achilles. At last he came, terrible as the god of War himself, with his golden armour shining in the sun. At the sight, even brave Hector was afraid, but he stood firm and challenged Achilles to fight.

Achilles threw his spear, but missed his aim. Hector threw his own spear, but it slipped aside from Achilles’ shield and broke into two pieces. Then Hector drew his sword and dashed forward against Achilles, who struck the brave Trojan across the neck. Down fell Hector in the dust, and Achilles stood over him and said proudly: ‘And so, proud Hector, you have not long enjoyed your victory over Patroclus!’

Hector, though his breath was failing him, begged that his body might be given to his friends for burial, but Achilles sternly answered: ‘Talk not to me of burial! Nothing can save you from being thrown to the dogs.’

Then Hector answered faintly: 'I cannot hope to change your purpose. But you should fear the anger of the gods, for before long Paris will strike you down, even though you are so brave a soldier.'

And so Hector died, and Achilles took his armour off the body and told the Greeks to return to their camp, taking the body with them. But later, old King Priam dared to come to the Greek camp and visit Achilles in his tent, to beg for the body of his best-loved son; and Achilles, pitying the old man and admiring him for his courage, allowed him to take away Hector's body and give it proper burial.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE DEATH OF ACHILLES

INSIDE the city of Troy, the Trojans now held a council to decide what should be done. One of Priam's advisers said: 'We can fight no longer, now that Hector has fallen. I fear that Achilles will burn our city and kill us all. The time has come for us to leave Troy and give up our fair city to the Greeks.'

But King Priam answered: 'Let us not leave our city. Let us stay, at least, until Memnon, the king of Ethiopia, arrives. I have good hope that he will soon be here. Whatever happens, it is

better for us to die like men with our faces to the enemy, than to run away and live for ever in some strange land.'

The wise Polydamas, who was tired of the war, answered him: 'If King Memnon is indeed coming, I trust that he may save our city and ourselves. But he, too, may be defeated by the powerful Achilles and the Greeks. Why do we not, even at this late hour, give up lovely Helen and the treasure, and so save our homes from the enemy?'

All the Trojan leaders felt that Polydamas was right, but none of them dared to say so. Paris spoke angrily to the wise man, saying: 'Polydamas, you are a coward on the battlefield, and your advice is foolishness. Stay at home if you wish, but the rest of the Trojans will follow me to battle, and win honour for us all.'

Polydamas replied: 'Your foolish daring has brought sorrow and suffering upon us all, and your advice will ruin our city!' And Paris dared say no more, for he knew that he was the cause of the war, yet he preferred to die rather than give up the beautiful Helen.

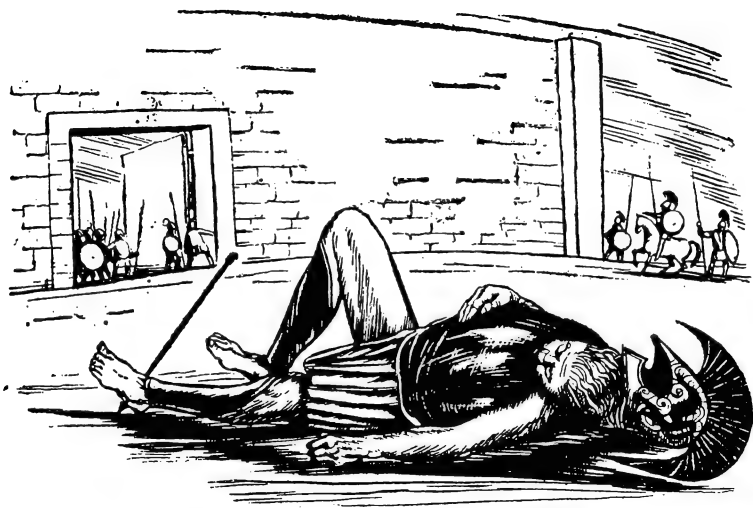
Soon after this the noble Memnon came, with a great army from Ethiopia. The Trojan princes welcomed him joyfully, and Priam was glad when he saw the great strength of his guest, and his splendid armour. On the next day Memnon led out his army in company with the Trojans, and a

great and terrible battle was fought. The two armies fell upon one another like the angry waves of the sea, and the earth trembled beneath their feet. Far to the right of the battle, Achilles killed two noble Trojans and many other soldiers besides; and, on the left, Memnon attacked the men of Pylos. He aimed his spear at old Nestor himself, and would have killed him, but young Antilochus ran in front of his father to protect him, and Memnon's spear ran through the heart of the brave young man and he fell dead. Filled with anger and sorrow, old Nestor ran forward to attack the Ethiopian king, and he would surely have lost his life but Memnon cried to him to stand back. He had now recognised the old man as a friend of his own father's and said he would not fight against him. So Nestor, sorrowing in his heart, went in search of Achilles, and begged him to fight Memnon and avenge the death of Antilochus.

So Achilles met Memnon, and there was a terrible fight between the two heroes. They drew their swords and stood face to face in their shining armour, their broad shoulders towering above the other soldiers. Each prince fought bravely, careless of death. Blood flowed from many a wound, and the dust rose from the ground under their feet and hung in a cloud overhead. All the gods watched the fight, for both Achilles and Memnon were goddess-born. At last Zeus lifted high the

scales of Fate. Down sank the scale of Memnon, weighted by his death, and Achilles struck him through the breast. The great Ethiopian fell dead to the ground.

As soon as they saw Memnon fall, the Trojans and Ethiopians fled back to Troy. Rejoicing at his victory, Achilles followed them, hoping that at last the Greeks could capture Troy. But as he reached the gates of the city Paris shot at him and, by luck, the arrow struck his left heel—the only spot through which Achilles could be killed by human weapons. The brave hero fell dead: Hector's dying prophecy had come true.



The arrow struck his left heel

When Achilles fell, the Trojans tried to seize his body, but great Ajax stood beside it, holding his shield between it and the enemy, while Odysseus fought bravely by his side. At last, protected by Ajax and his great shield, Odysseus took up the body of Achilles on his broad shoulders and carried it back to the camp.

The Greeks sorrowed more bitterly for Achilles than for any of the other heroes who had fallen before Troy. The whole army built him a splendid funeral pile, and Thetis herself came to the camp of the Myrmidons to weep for her brave son, killed in the flower of his youth, as she had known he would be. After Thetis and Briseis had wept over his body, the Myrmidons burned it upon the funeral pile, flinging their richest treasures into the flames to show honour to their king. Then they gathered up his ashes and buried them on the seashore, close to the sparkling waters of the Hellespont.

## CHAPTER 10

### THE WOODEN HORSE

ONE day as Odysseus was wandering outside the camp, he met a stranger, a wise man who told him that there was an ancient prophecy concerning Troy, which said that the city would never be captured so long as the holy statue of Athene remained in her temple in the city.

When evening came, Odysseus made up his mind to try to steal the statue, even though it was kept in the temple of the goddess in the very centre of Troy. He dressed as a beggar, hid a sharp sword under his rags, and, taking Diomedes with him, set off towards Troy. When they came to the city, Diomedes stayed behind in a hiding-place near the walls, and Odysseus went up to the gate to beg for food and money. The guard took no notice of the ragged old beggar and allowed him to pass into the city. Odysseus had been in Troy once before, so now he was able to find his way through the streets to the temple.

He begged from all whom he met, and no one recognised him until, just at the gate of the temple, he suddenly met Helen, who had been praying to the goddess and was now returning home. Helen saw at once who he was and realised the danger he was in. She hurriedly took him to her own house, shut and locked the door, and said: 'Odysseus, what dangerous plan is this? How dare you enter Troy alone? Tell me, what hope have the Greeks of winning the city? If they do, will Menelaus take me back, or will he kill me when he meets me? If so, it would be better for me to die here in Troy.'

She began to weep, and Odysseus answered: 'The Greeks can never win the city while the holy statue of Athene remains in her temple. They



say it fell from heaven and was not made by the hands of mortal men. So now I have come to take it away. My friend Diomedes is waiting outside the walls. The two of us can easily overpower the temple guard and steal the statue, if only you will help us.'

Helen smiled at him through her tears, admiring his courage. Odysseus thought that he had never seen her look more lovely, for her beauty remained unchanged by time and sorrow. Then she said: 'I wish that I had never come here, leaving my pleasant home in Sparta! Surely I was mad when I listened to Paris. And now, if the Greeks take Troy, who can tell what will happen to me? Yet you are a Greek, and I must help you. Come with me. I will show you how to make the attempt.'

Helen led Odysseus through the city to a small gate, by which she let in Diomedes. Then she led them back to the temple, and returned to her own house. Odysseus and Diomedes forced their way into the temple, killed the guard, and seized the statue. Quickly they ran through the quiet streets to the little gate, and soon reached the Greek camp in safety.

After the statue had been carried off, the Greeks felt sure that Troy must fall. But every time that they attacked the walls the Trojans drove them back. At last the wise man, Calchas, warned them

that they must win the city by trickery and not by force, and so Odysseus made a clever plan.

‘Let us build a great wooden horse,’ he said, ‘large enough to hold all our bravest heroes inside it. Then let the rest of the Greeks burn their tents and set sail, as though they meant to return home. One man, a stranger to the Trojans, must stay behind, with his hands tied behind his back and his face covered with dirt and blood. When the ships have gone, the Trojans will come out of their city to look at the Greek camp, and they will find the wooden horse standing there. Then this man will come forward and tell them that the Greeks made the horse as an offering to Athene, to turn away her anger for the theft of her holy statue. He will also tell them that he himself is a stranger whom the Greeks intended to sacrifice to their gods, but he managed to escape from them.

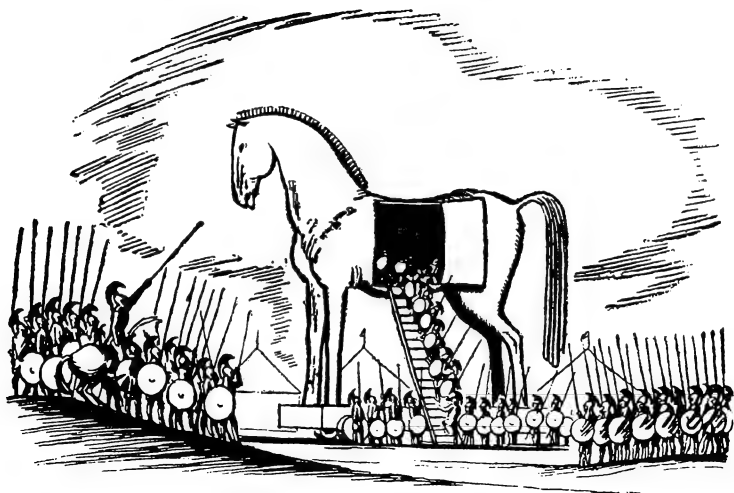
‘If he tells his story well, the Trojans will be sure to take the wooden horse into their city, to replace the statue which they have lost. We must build the horse so large that it cannot pass through the gates, and they will have to make a great hole in the walls to get it through. When they have taken it into the city and placed it in the temple, our man must light a great fire upon the highest tower as a signal to our ships. After this he must go to the horse and let out the heroes who are hidden inside it. The rest of the Greeks will return

in the ships, make their way through the break in the walls, and Troy will be ours.'

When Odysseus suggested this plan, the Greeks were at once anxious to carry it out. They chose Epeus to build the horse, because he was the cleverest workman in the army. Agamemnon sent men to cut down trees on Mount Ida, and they all worked hard under the orders of Epeus until he had made a noble horse, shaping its head and flowing tail so that it almost looked alive.

When the horse was finished, Odysseus said: 'My friends, the time has come to prove which of you are the bravest, for now a desperate deed must be done. We must hide ourselves inside the horse, and either we shall win Troy or we shall be found out and die. As soon as we are all inside, the rest of you must burn the tents and set sail for the island of Tenedos. There you must wait and watch until you see the fire signal from Troy. And let some brave youth, whose face the Trojans have not seen, stay behind and tell them the tale that we have planned.'

A young man called Sinon stood up and said that he dared to be that man. All the army wondered at him, for he had never before shown such courage. While they were tying his hands and making him ready to play his part, the chosen heroes went up the ladder into the hollow horse. First went Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, and next



The chosen heroes went up the ladder into the hollow horse

to him brave Menelaus. Then came Odysseus and Diomedes, and many another hero besides, until there was no room for more.\* Last of all came Epeus, the maker of the horse, because he knew best how to fasten up the door by which they had climbed in.

As soon as all these heroes were fast shut up inside the great wooden horse, the others burned their camp and set sail for the west.

There was great feasting in the city of Troy that night. Sinon had told his story well, and the Trojans really believed that they were safe at last. Their long siege was ended, and, with their own eyes, they had seen the hated Greeks sail away.

The walls had been broken, and the great wooden horse had been dragged into the city and placed before the temple of Athene. Now all the Trojans were lying in a heavy, dreamless sleep, and Sinon stole gently through the silent streets towards the high watch-tower. No guard was there: they were all sleeping or feasting still. Sinon lighted a great fire in the tower, and then made his way to the temple, to where the wooden horse shone white in the moonlight. He called in a low voice to the heroes inside, and they all came out, down the ladder which Epeus had built for them. Each man's heart beat loudly as he seized his weapons and made ready to attack the sleeping city. They ran to the doors of the nearest houses and began to burn and kill, and the rest of the army—returning in their ships—poured in through the break in the walls, and Troy was won.

Odysseus and Menelaus, who knew their ways through the streets, went at once to the house of Deiphobus, where Helen lived now that Paris was dead. When they broke into his house Deiphobus was asleep, but at the noise of their entrance he started up and seized his weapons, while Helen, screaming, tried to run away as soon as she saw Menelaus. Although he was taken by surprise and was without armour, Deiphobus fought bravely, but before long Menelaus overpowered him and struck him dead. With the bloody sword still in his hand,

he then turned towards Helen, for he meant to kill her also. For a while he looked at her, as she stood in the bright light of the blazing city; but as he looked upon her ageless and perfect beauty, he forgot his purpose and all the wrong which she had done him. He let his sword fall to the ground, took her gently by the hand, and led her away in silence.

Later they returned to Sparta together, and lived there happily for many years.

**PART II**  
**THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS**





## CHAPTER 1

### THE LAND OF THE CYCLOPES

THE Greeks left Troy a heap of burning ruins, and sailed for home in triumph. They had many troubles on their way home, and years passed before some of the leaders reached their own cities. Old Nestor soon arrived back at his town of Pylos, but the noble Agamemnon had a tragic homecoming. While he was at Troy, his wife Clytemnestra, the sister of Helen, had fallen in love with a young man named Aegisthus, and she had married him, just as though Agamemnon had been dead.

A year before Agamemnon's return, Aegisthus had set a watchman on a high tower near the seashore, to watch for the arrival of Agamemnon's ships. As soon as they were seen, the watchman ran to Mycenae with the good news. Aegisthus hid twenty armed soldiers in the great hall, and then he drove down to meet Agamemnon, pretending that he had come to welcome him and take him to his palace. Then he gave a great feast for the returning heroes, and in the middle of the feast the armed men, who had been hiding behind curtains, rushed out and killed Agamemnon and all his faithful friends.

Odysseus knew nothing about these murders at the time, but later he heard the story, and when he at last reached his own country he was careful to dress himself as a stranger, in case there were enemies in his own house, too. But he had years of wandering and many strange adventures before he came to his own home again.

When Odysseus left Troy the wind carried him to the coast of Thrace, where the people were friendly with the Trojans. He and his men landed at Ismarus and captured and burned the town, just as they had burned Troy; but Odysseus allowed no one to harm Maron, the priest of Apollo, and he protected him and his wife and child. Maron was grateful and gave Odysseus gold and silver, and also twelve large jars filled with wine. The wine was so strong that men mixed only one measure of wine to twenty measures of water before they drank it. Odysseus took these presents with him in his ship, and he was later very glad to have them.

After they left Ismarus, there was a great storm at sea and their ships were driven far off their proper course. For more than a week they were blown south in unknown seas, and on the tenth day they reached the land of the Lotus Eaters. Here Odysseus sent three men on shore in search of drinking water and food. The Lotus Eaters were a quiet, friendly people, and they willingly gave some of the lotus fruit to the strange sailors.

Now, whoever tasted this fruit never wanted to leave the island, but were content to stay there for ever, dreaming happy dreams and forgetting the outside world. The three men ate the lotus fruit and sat down happily to dream, but when they did not return to the ship Odysseus went in search of them. Realising what had happened, he forced them to return to the ship, where he bound their hands and feet and sailed away with all speed.

After some days they reached another island, which, although they did not know it, was the land of the Cyclopes. The Cyclopes were a race of giants, with only one eye each, set in the middle of their foreheads. They lived in caves among the hills, and kept great flocks of sheep.

Odysseus anchored his ships in the bay so that they were hidden from the large island by a smaller one, and the men spent the day in hunting wild goats and feasting on fresh meat and the wine of Maron, the priest of Ismarus. Next day Odysseus took twelve men with him and went to see what kind of people lived on the large island. They found a big cave close to the sea. Nobody was there, but inside the cave they found great baskets of cheese, bowls of milk, and young lambs playing in a stone enclosure. It all seemed very peaceful and pleasant.

The men wanted to take as much cheese as they could carry and return to their ships, but Odysseus

was anxious to see the owner of the cave, so they stayed there, eating some of the cheese and drinking some of Maron's wine, which they had brought with them. When evening came, a huge giant entered the cave and threw down the trunk of a tree which he was carrying for firewood. Next he drove his flock of sheep into the cave, and then picked up a great flat stone which he placed in the entrance to serve as a door. Twenty-four horses could not have dragged away that stone. Lastly the man milked his sheep and put the milk in bowls to drink for supper. All this time, Odysseus and his men sat silently in great fear, for they were shut up in a cave with a one-eyed giant, whose cheese they had been eating.

Suddenly the giant saw the men, and asked them who they were. Odysseus answered that they were Greeks returning from Troy, and that they were wandering lost on the seas. He asked the giant to be kind to them, in the name of their chief god, Zeus.

The giant laughed and said: 'We Cyclopes care nothing for Zeus or the gods, for we think that we are better men than they. Where is your ship?'

Odysseus thought it wiser not to tell the man where their ships were anchored, so he answered that they had been wrecked on the coast. The giant made no reply to this, but snatched up two of the twelve men, tore their bodies limb from

limb, roasted them at his fire, and ate them. Then, after drinking many bowls of milk, he lay down and fell asleep. Odysseus wanted to kill the giant while he slept, but he remembered that they would never be able to move the huge stone which filled the doorway of the cave. So, even if they succeeded in killing the giant, they would be prisoners in the cave and would starve to death.

In the morning the giant ate two more men for breakfast, drove out his sheep, and set the great stone in the entrance again. Odysseus, however, did not give up hope, for he had made a plan. The giant had left the tree trunk in the cave, and from this Odysseus cut a piece six feet long, and sharpened the end to a point. It was arranged that four of the men should twist the point in the giant's eye when he fell asleep that night. He came back at sunset and drove his sheep into the cave again. Then he closed his stone door and killed two men and cooked them.

Meanwhile, Odysseus filled one of the wooden bowls full of Maron's strong wine, without putting any water in it. He offered this bowl to the giant, who had never tasted wine. The Cyclops drank one bowl after another, and soon he became very cheerful and said that he would give Odysseus a present. 'What is your name?' he asked.

'My name is *Nobody*,' Odysseus answered.

‘Then I shall eat the others first and Nobody last,’ said the giant. ‘That shall be your gift.’ And he went to sleep.

Odysseus at once took his long bar of wood and held the point in the fire until it was red-hot. Next his four men pushed it into the giant’s one eye. The Cyclops roared and leaped to his feet, shouting for help to the other giants who lived in the neighbouring caves. ‘Who is troubling you?’ they called, and the giant answered: ‘Nobody is killing me!’

‘If nobody is harming you, why do you wake us out of our sleep?’ shouted the other giants, and they all went back to bed. Odysseus laughed to see how his trickery had deceived them.

The next morning the giant removed the huge stone from the entrance and sat in the doorway, stretching out his arms to catch his prisoners as they went out. But Odysseus had a plan. He fastened sets of three sheep together, and tied a man to each of the middle sheep, so that the blind giant’s hands would only feel the outside ones. The sheep went out through the doorway and the giant felt them, but he did not know that they were carrying the men.

When they were all safely out of the cave, Odysseus unfastened the men and drove the sheep down to his ships. They raised anchor and sailed quickly out to sea; and when they were at a safe



The sheep went out through the doorway

distance away, Odysseus shouted to the Cyclops: 'If anyone asks who blinded you, say that it was Odysseus, the son of Laertes, of Ithaca!'

Then the giant prayed to his father, the sea-god Poseidon, that Odysseus might never reach home, or if he did, that he might first have many years of unhappy wanderings and return alone to find great sorrow in his house. He threw a huge rock into the sea, but it fell behind the ships and the wave it made drove them further away from the island. Odysseus and his men sailed away and continued on their travels.

But the sea-god, Poseidon, heard the prayer of his son the blind giant, and did not forgive Odysseus.

## CHAPTER 2

### CIRCE THE ENCHANTRESS

ODYSSEUS and his men sailed on until they came to another island, and there they landed. They did not know what the place was, but it was called Aeaea, and Circe, the enchantress, lived there.

Odysseus took his sword and spear and climbed to the top of a high hill. From here he saw smoke rising out of a wood, and he guessed that there must be a house there. He thought of going to the house alone, but decided to return to the ship and come back later with a party of his men. For all he knew, there might be more man-eating giants on this island.

Next morning Odysseus divided his men into two parties, with Eurylochus in charge of one party and he himself in charge of the other. Then they put two marked pieces of wood, one for Eurylochus and one for Odysseus, in a helmet, to decide who should go to the house in the wood. They shook the helmet and Eurylochus's piece of wood fell out; so, filled with fear, Eurylochus led his twenty-two men away into the forest. Odysseus and the other twenty-two waited on the ship. After some time Eurylochus returned alone, weeping and unable to speak for sorrow.



At last he told his story. They had come to the house in the wood, and had seen the beautiful enchantress, Circe. Tame wolves and lions were playing in front of the house, and they jumped up, like friendly dogs, round the men as they stood in the gateway and listened to Circe singing sweetly inside the house. Then one of the men called to her and she came out—a beautiful lady in a white dress covered with gold and jewels. She opened the doors and invited them inside, but Eurylochos hid himself and watched through a window. He saw Circe and her ladies mix honey and wine for the men; but when they had drunk the wine, Circe touched them with her magic wand and they were all turned into swine. The enchantress drove them out and shut them in a hut, and Eurylochos ran back to the ship.

When Odysseus heard this story, he fastened on his sword-belt, seized his bow and arrows, and told Eurylochos to come back with him to the house of Circe. But Eurylochos was afraid; so Odysseus went alone through the woods. On his way he met a beautiful young man who took him by the hand and said: ‘Unhappy one! How can you hope to save your friends from such a powerful enchantress as Circe?’

The brave Odysseus said that he was going to try his best, and the young man picked a white flower and gave it to him. ‘Take this flower,’ he

said, 'and when Circe has made you drink her wine, show her the flower and tell her that the god Hermes gave it to you. Then draw your sword and make her promise not to harm you with her magic.'

Then Hermes disappeared, and Odysseus went to the house in the wood. Circe asked him to enter, and gave him the enchanted wine to drink. Then she touched him with her wand and told him to go to the hut and join the swine. But Odysseus showed her the white flower and drew his sword, and Circe fell at his feet crying: 'Truly you must be Odysseus of Ithaca? The god Hermes told me that you would visit my island on your way home from Troy. Come, let us be friends. You need not be afraid of me.'

She called her servants to bring food and wine, but Odysseus sat silent. He was filled with sorrow for his men and would neither eat nor drink. At last Circe went out to the hut and turned the swine into men again. They wept with joy when they saw Odysseus, and thanked him for saving them.

They returned to the ship and told the other sailors that Circe wished them all to go and live with her. Eurylochus tried to frighten them by saying that she would turn them all into wolves or lions, but the men laughed at his fears and in the end they all went back to the house in the wood. Circe welcomed them and gave them a feast, and they lived with her for a whole year.

After a year, however, they began to long for their wives and children, and wanted to return to Ithaca. They did not guess what dangers they would have to face on their journey, but Circe warned them and begged them to remain with her for ever. When she realised that they were all determined to continue on their journey, she warned Odysseus again of all the dangers he would meet, and showed him how he might escape them. He listened and remembered all she said, and then they said goodbye for ever. Circe wandered away alone into the woods, and Odysseus and his men set sail once more across the unknown seas.

After they had sailed for some time the wind fell and the sea was calm. They saw a beautiful island and heard sweet singing. Odysseus knew who the singers were, for Circe had told him that they were the Sirens, beautiful but dangerous women who charmed men to their island with their sweet singing. But any man who landed on the island and listened to that strange music was never seen again.

Odysseus took a great lump of bees' wax and cut it into small pieces. He told his men to put the wax in their ears, so that they would not hear the Sirens' voices. Odysseus, however, was curious to hear their singing, so he told the sailors to fasten him tightly to the mast with ropes, saying that they must not untie him, however much he begged them



‘ Stay with us, Odysseus,’ they sang

to set him free. When all this was done the men rowed the ship past the island and the sweet singing of the Sirens could be heard across the water. ‘ Stay with us, Odysseus,’ they sang, ‘ and we will give you all knowledge and wisdom. We will teach you many things, and you shall be the wisest man on earth.’

In spite of Circe’s warning, Odysseus was enchanted by the magic of their voices and struggled to loosen the ropes that bound him. But Eurylochus only fastened the ropes more tightly and the ship went past the island in safety. When the song of the Sirens could be heard no longer, the men took the wax out of their ears and set Odysseus free.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ROCK AND THE WHIRLPOOL

THE ship had not sailed far when it came to a place where the sea narrowed between two high black rocks. Under the rock on the left was a terrible whirlpool. The rock on the other side did not look dangerous, but Circe had warned Odysseus against both the rock and the whirlpool. Beneath the rock on the right there was a cave, where a terrible creature lived. This creature had six frightful heads, and was called Scylla. Each head hung down from a long thin neck, and in each mouth there were three rows of greedy teeth and twelve long tongues. The tongues had claws on the end of them, ready to catch any men who passed by.

Circe had warned Odysseus of all this. He knew that Charybdis, the whirlpool, would swallow up his whole ship, but Scylla could only catch some of his men. For this reason he told the sailors to row close to the rock on the right; but he did not tell them that Scylla waited there, hidden in her deep cave. They rowed down the narrow sea, anxiously watching the whirlpool. Suddenly the six heads of Scylla sprang out from the cave and seized six of Odysseus's men. They cried out to him in terror but he could do nothing to save them.

The ship swept through the narrow stream between the rock of Scylla and the whirlpool of Charybdis and reached the open sea at last. The men, tired and frightened, and filled with sorrow for their lost companions, begged to be allowed to rest. Ahead of the ship lay a beautiful island, and they could hear the sound of cows and sheep in the green fields. It was the sacred island of Thrinacia, and Odysseus remembered that Circe had warned him that if his men killed and ate the cattle of the Sun on this island, they would all die. He told his men about Circe's warning, and said they must row past the island; but Eurylochos was angry and said that the men were tired and could row no further. They must land and take supper, he said, and sleep comfortably on the shore. On hearing Eurylochos, the whole crew cried out that they would go no further that night, and Odysseus could do no more. He made them promise not to touch the sacred cattle, and then they went ashore.

During the night a great storm arose, and for a whole month the sea was too rough for the little ship to set sail again. The sailors ate up all the stores on the ship and drank all the wine, and soon they became hungry and discontented. Odysseus climbed the island hill alone, to pray to the gods for help, and when he had prayed he found a sheltered place and went to sleep.

While Odysseus was away, Euryloclus persuaded the hungry crew to kill some of the sacred cattle of the sun-god. When Odysseus returned to the ship he smelt the roasting meat and knew what had been done. He was terribly angry and would not touch the meat himself, but the others continued to eat it for six days. After this the storm ended and the sun shone once more, and they set sail and left the island.

But their wickedness was punished. When they were out of sight of land, a great storm arose again. The wind broke the mast, and lightning struck the ship, breaking it into two halves. All the sailors were drowned except Odysseus, who managed to tie himself to the broken mast.

Odysseus struggled through the rough seas, clinging to the mast and rowing with his hands as well as he could, and at last the waves carried him on to the sandy beach of an island. A kind of goddess, called a nymph, lived on the island. Her name was Calypso, and she found Odysseus lying half-dead upon the beach. She was kind to him and kept him in her cave, where he lived for seven long years. He longed to return to Ithaca and his wife Penelope, but no ship ever came near the island and Odysseus himself had no boat in which he could sail away. The nymph was very kind and very beautiful, but Odysseus was homesick for his own country and he could find no happiness with Calypso.

At last, however, the gods took pity on him and sent Hermes to visit the nymph. Calypso, being immortal herself, recognised the god at once. She spread a table with ambrosia (the food of the gods) and mixed a bowl of nectar (the wine of the gods). Then, when Hermes was rested and refreshed, she asked him why he had come to see her.

‘Zeus sent me,’ Hermes replied. ‘He says that you have with you a man who is very homesick and longs for his own land. He is one of the brave Greeks who besieged Troy, and fought for ten long years before they captured the city. On the way home he and his men offended the gods, who have made them suffer greatly. But now



Calypso mixed a bowl of nectar



Odysseus has been punished enough, and Zeus says you must let him go. It is the wish of the gods that Odysseus should return to his own country, and not die in a strange land.'

Calypso was filled with sadness at the thought of losing Odysseus, but she knew the gods must be obeyed, so she went in search of the lonely, unhappy man. She found him on the seashore, his eyes full of tears as he sat looking across the great ocean and thinking of his wife and home. Standing beside him Calypso said: 'Odysseus, forget your sorrow, for I will send you home. Build yourself a wooden boat, and I will give you food and water to take with you. Then I will send fair winds, so that you will reach your own country in safety. This is the wish of the gods, and I must obey them.'

Odysseus answered her with loving gratitude, and the next day Calypso brought carpenter's tools and he cut down trees and made himself a boat, with a mast and sails. In five days the boat was finished, and Calypso gave him wine and water and many pleasant things to eat. They kissed for the last time and said goodbye. He set out across the wide sea, and she remained alone in her island home. Odysseus might have lived for ever with the beautiful nymph, but he chose to live and die, if he could, with his wife Penelope.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE HOME-COMING

FOR seventeen days Odysseus sailed the seas while the fair winds blew him towards Ithaca. At last one night he felt his boat scrape against sand and he found himself on dry land once more. He was tired out with his travels and he threw himself down on the sandy beach and went to sleep.

When Odysseus awoke the next morning, a mist hid the land and he did not recognise it as his own island of Ithaca. He thought he must have landed in some strange country, and he walked sadly up and down on the seashore. Here he met a young man dressed like a king's son, with a spear in his hand. Odysseus asked him what country this was, and the young man replied: 'Truly, stranger, you must have come from far away. This is the island of Ithaca.'

Odysseus was filled with joy that he was home at last, but he did not tell the young man who he was. He was not sure whether the young men of Ithaca would welcome him back after all these years, so he pretended that he was a Cretan and had come from Crete in a Phœnician ship. He said that the Phœnicians had promised to take him to Pylos, but the wind had carried them out of their way and they had landed and slept on the

shore here. The Phœnicians, however, had sailed away without him, leaving him still asleep.

Then the young man laughed, and was suddenly revealed as the great goddess, Athene. 'You have a clever tongue!' she said. 'Yet you did not know me, although I helped you at Troy. Now I have come to warn you that you must let no one know who you really are, for you have many powerful enemies here.'

'You did not help me in my dangers on the sea,' said Odysseus. 'And now you are making fun of me. Is this really my own country?'

'I could not help you on the sea,' Athene answered, 'because I did not wish to quarrel with my brother, Poseidon, the sea-god. He was angry with you for blinding his son, the Cyclops. But come, you shall see that this is really Ithaca,' she went on, and she scattered the white mist so that Odysseus recognised his own dear country. Then the goddess told him how he might destroy his enemies, even though he was all alone.

First, with her magic she made him look like an old man, with tired eyes and wrinkled skin. Then she dressed him as a beggar, in torn and dirty rags, so that no one would recognise him. 'Now,' she said, 'go to the house of Eumæus, the swineherd, and stay with him until I bring your son, Telemachus, home again. Telemachus is visiting Helen and Menelaus in Sparta, and I will tell him

to return home with all speed. Meanwhile, Eumæus will tell you all that has happened here during your absence, and you will understand why I have warned you to be careful.'

Athene left him, and Odysseus climbed over the hills to the farm where the swineherd lived. When he reached the farmhouse, the swineherd, Eumæus, was sitting alone in front of his door. He was a very honest man and had always been true to old King Laertes and his family. Eumæus did not recognise Odysseus but he was kind to the old beggar and took him into his house, giving him food and wine. He also gave him news of his wife Penélope and their son Telemachus, who had been a baby when Odysseus had left for Troy but was now a brave and good-looking youth of twenty. Penelope, Eumæus said, had for a long time been very unhappy. When Odysseus did not come home after the war, it was supposed that he must be dead. Telemachus was still a boy at that time, and Odysseus's father, Laertes, was very old and no longer ruled the country. There was thus no king, and the young men of Ithaca, who had all grown up while their fathers were away in Troy, did exactly as they pleased. Twelve of them wanted to marry Penelope, and they, with about a hundred others as wild as themselves, spent their days at the palace, eating Penelope's food and drinking her wine. Nobody could stop them, and

they said they would never go away until Penelope chose one of them to be her husband and king of Ithaca. They did not care that Telemachus was the rightful prince, and always treated him with insulting rudeness.

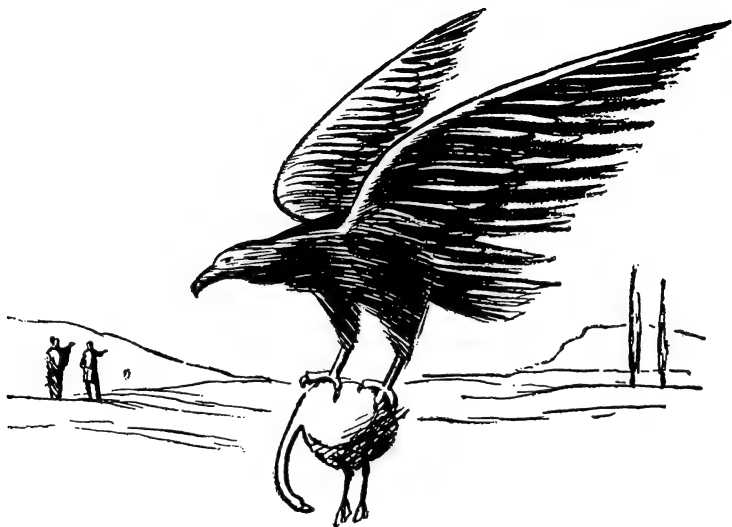
Penelope at last promised that she would choose a husband when she had finished weaving a great linen cloth. All day she wove it, but at night, when the young men had gone home (for they did not sleep at the palace), she undid all that she had woven during the day. But the young men were growing very impatient, and Eumæus feared that they would soon insist on Penelope's marriage with one of them.

Odysseus was so disturbed by this news that he could not hide his tears, and Eumæus asked him who he was and whether he had any news of their lost king. Odysseus replied that the king of Ithaca would certainly come home, and then he told the swineherd a long story about himself. He was a Cretan, he said, and had fought at Troy. Later he had been shipwrecked in a neighbouring country, where he had learned that Odysseus was still alive and would soon return to Ithaca.

Eumæus did not really believe this tale, but he gave the old beggar a good meal, and Odysseus entertained him with stories about the siege of Troy until it was time for them to go to bed.

Meanwhile Athene had gone to Sparta to the house of Menelaus, where Telemachus was lying awake. She told him that Penelope, his mother, was in great trouble, and advised him to sail home at once. When he reached Ithaca he must send his sailors to the town, but he himself must walk alone across the hills to see the swineherd.

In the morning Telemachus said goodbye to Menelaus and Helen, telling them about Athene's visit to him. Just as he was leaving their palace, an eagle came down from the sky and flew away with a great white goose which was feeding on the grass. Beautiful Helen explained the meaning of



An eagle came down and flew away with a great white goose

this happening. 'You saw how the eagle came down from the hill and snatched away the goose,' she said. 'In the same way, Odysseus will return home after all his wanderings and take vengeance on his enemies. In fact, he is already in Ithaca, planning how to defeat them.'

Telemachus was overjoyed, and thanked Helen for prophesying such good luck. He went to his ship in the harbour and set sail at once for Ithaca. When he arrived, he sent his crew to the town and walked across the island to the swineherd's house.

The swineherd and Odysseus had just lit a fire to cook their breakfast when they saw the farm dogs welcoming a young man who was walking towards the house. As he came nearer, Eumæus saw that it was Telemachus, and he ran out to welcome him. When Telemachus stepped into the swineherd's house, Odysseus rose from his seat, but the young prince kindly told the old beggar man to sit down again. They ate their breakfast and then Telemachus asked the swineherd to go and tell Penelope that her son had returned in safety.

Eumæus set off at once to the town, and after he had gone the farm dogs suddenly began to whine and show every sign of fear. Telemachus could not think why they were afraid, but Odysseus saw the goddess Athene, who appeared to him alone. The dogs had known that something strange and terrible was coming to the door. Athene told

Odysseus to tell Telemachus who he really was, now that they were alone. She touched him with her wand and made him appear like himself, good-looking and strong and dressed like a king.

Telemachus, who had neither seen nor heard Athene, was greatly astonished and thought that the beggar man must be some god. But Odysseus said: 'I am no god, but your own father!' And they kissed each other and wept for joy.

Odysseus asked Telemachus for more news of the young men who spent their days in the palace, and learned that they were a hundred and eight in number. They were all strong young men and kept their swords by their sides, but wore no helmets or armour. Odysseus said that, with the help of Athene, he hoped to defeat them all. Telemachus must return to the palace, and Odysseus would come next day, dressed like an old beggar. Telemachus must take no notice of the insults of the young men, but when he saw a chance, he must remove all the shields and weapons which hung on the walls of the great hall, and hide them in the armoury. Telemachus must keep two swords, two spears, and two shields for himself and Odysseus to use, but he must tell no one that the old beggar man was his father.

And so they talked and planned together, and, before Eumæus returned, Athene changed Odysseus into the ragged old beggar again.



## CHAPTER 5

### ODYSSEUS GOES TO THE PALACE

NEXT morning Telemachus returned to the palace and comforted his mother, telling her about his visit to Menelaus and Helen. But this did not interest Penelope, who thought that her beautiful cousin was the cause of all her troubles.

Later, Odysseus and the swineherd came to the town. As they entered the palace courtyard, an old dog saw them and gave them a feeble welcome. This was Odysseus's favourite dog, Argos, who had been young and active when his master had left for Troy; but now he was very old and weak and could not run to greet his master. Yet even after all these years, he recognised Odysseus although he was dressed in rags like a beggar. The old dog wagged his tail and licked his master's hand, and then—full of happiness—he lay down again and died. Odysseus stroked the old dog gently, and turned away to hide his tears.

His old dog knew Odysseus, but his wife Penelope did not know him when she saw him. Eumæus went into the house, but Odysseus sat down on a wooden bench outside the hall. Telemachus saw him and told Eumæus to take some bread and meat to the beggar. As Odysseus ate the food, he watched all the young men who sat eating at the

great table in the hall. When he had finished his meal, he decided to see if any of the young men were kind and generous, and he entered the hall and began to beg among them. Some gave him crusts and bones, but one man called Antinous picked up a footstool and struck him hard on the shoulder.

‘May Antinous die before his wedding day!’ said Odysseus, and even the other young men scolded Antinous for striking a beggar.

Penelope saw what happened, and told Eumæus to bring the beggar to her. But Odysseus sent a message to her saying that he had been struck once



Antinous picked up a footstool and struck him hard on the shoulder

in the hall, and he would not come to her until evening, after the wild young men had left the house.

At sunset the young men went home to their houses in the town, and Telemachus and Odysseus took down all the shields and spears from the walls, and hid them in the armoury above the great hall. Then Telemachus went to sleep in his own room and Odysseus waited in the hall for Penelope. Soon she came down, and asked him who he was and whether he had any news of her husband.

Odysseus praised her beauty, for she was still very lovely, but he did not answer her question. She insisted again that he should tell her who he was, and he answered that he was a Cretan prince. He had not gone to Troy, but he had met Odysseus when the great man had visited Crete on his way to Troy. Penelope wept when she heard that the stranger had seen her husband, but many people had told her false stories about him, so she asked how Odysseus was dressed. The beggar replied that Odysseus was wearing a purple cloak, fastened with a brooch shaped like a hunting dog.

On hearing this, Penelope wept again and said that she herself had given Odysseus the brooch and the cloak. She now felt sure that the beggar had really met her husband. He went on to tell her that he had heard that Odysseus was still alive, but he had lost all his crew. The beggar said he

was sure that Odysseus would return to Ithaca that year.

Penelope could hardly believe such good news, but she told Eurycleia, the old nurse, to wash the beggar's feet in warm water. Odysseus turned his face away from the firelight so that the old woman would not recognise him, but, even so, she remarked that he was very like her master. As she washed his legs she noticed the long scar of a wound which he had received out hunting, long ago, before he was married. The nurse knew him now, and spoke to him in a whisper, calling him by his name. Odysseus signalled to her to be silent, and she went away.

When Eurycleia had gone, Penelope told the beggar that she could no longer refuse to marry one of the twelve young men. She said that Odysseus had left a great bow in the house, and also twelve iron axes, made with a round hole in the blade of each. Before he went to Troy, Odysseus used to set the axes together in a line and shoot an arrow through the holes in the blades. The bow was so stiff that only a very strong man could bend it. Penelope said she had promised to bring the bow and the axes to the twelve young men, and to marry any one of them who could bend the bow and shoot an arrow through the twelve axe-heads.

‘I think,’ said the beggar, ‘that Odysseus will be here before any of the twelve have bent his

bow.' He smiled at Penelope, and she said good-night to him and went to her room, while Odysseus lay down to sleep on the floor of the great hall.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE END OF THE STORY

THE next morning the twelve young men returned, as usual, to the palace, bringing all their friends with them. When they were all gathered together, Penelope came into the great hall carrying Odysseus's bow, and her servants followed her with the chest which contained the twelve iron axes.

Penelope looked scornfully at her twelve lovers and told them proudly that, if she must marry, she would take the man who could bend the bow and shoot an arrow through the axe-heads. Telemachus said that he would make the first attempt, and that, if he succeeded, he would not allow any man to take his mother away from her own house. Three times he tried to bend the bow, and the fourth time he would have succeeded, but Odysseus made a sign to him, and he put it down. 'I am too weak,' he said. 'Let a stronger man try his skill.'

Each of the twelve lovers tried in turn, but no one was strong enough to bend the great bow. Then Odysseus took Eumæus out into the court-

yard and said to him: ' Whose side would you take if Odysseus came home? Would you fight for him or for the young men?'

' For Odysseus!' cried the faithful swineherd. ' How I wish that he would come today!'

' He has come, for I am he! ' said Odysseus, and he showed Eumæus the old scar on his leg.

The swineherd kissed his hand and wept tears of joy, and Odysseus told him that he was going back into the hall. He would ask for permission to try to bend the bow, and, whatever the others said, Eumæus must place it in his hands. He must then send the women out of the hall and lock the doors. Odysseus then returned to the hall and Eumæus followed him.

None of the young men had been successful with the bow, and Antinous was just suggesting that they should put off the trial for another day. They began to drink, but Odysseus asked to be allowed to try his skill. The young men laughed at him scornfully, but Penelope said the beggar must be allowed to try his strength. She would not, of course, marry him, even if he succeeded, she said, but she would give him new clothes, a sword, and a spear, and send him wherever he wanted to go. Telemachus cried out that the bow was his by rights, and he would make a present of it to the beggar if he chose. He told his mother to leave the hall, and, amazed to hear her son speak like

the master of the house, she went upstairs with her maidens.

Telemachus placed the bow in Odysseus's hands, and Eumæus quietly locked all the doors. The young men sat and laughed at the beggar, but suddenly he bent and strung the great bow as easily as a musician fastens a new string to his instrument. He took up an arrow that lay on the table, fitted it to the string, and shot it through all the twelve axe-heads. He turned and smiled at his son, and Telemachus drew his sword, took a spear in his left hand, and stood beside Odysseus.

With one leap Odysseus reached the door, where he stood with the bow in his hand. 'Now,' he said, 'I will hit something that no man has ever shot before!' He aimed the arrow at Antinous, who was drinking wine from a golden cup. The arrow passed right through his throat. The cup crashed to the ground and Antinous fell across the table, dead. The other young men leapt up angrily, looking round the walls for shields and spears, but the walls were bare.

'You shall die, and eagles shall peck your bones!' they shouted, thinking that the beggar had let the arrow fly by mistake.

'Dogs!' answered Odysseus scornfully. 'Don't you know who I am? You have wasted my possessions and insulted my wife, thinking that I should

never return from Troy. But now the day of death is upon you. Odysseus will have his revenge!

‘Draw your swords!’ cried Eurymachus to the others. ‘Hold up the tables as shields against this man’s arrows!’ He drew his own sword and leapt forward, but Odysseus shot an arrow through his breast and killed him. Another enemy rushed towards Odysseus, but Telemachus shot him through the shoulder with his spear.

At this moment, a faithless servant of Telemachus, called Melanthius, climbed up to the armoury and threw down helmets, shields and spears to the twelve young men. But the goddess Athene appeared to Odysseus, and gave him courage. He needed her encouragement, for he was now attacked on all sides by his enemies. A dozen spears were thrown from all directions, but Athene turned them aside from their target, and Odysseus and his son and the faithful swineherd fought with such bravery that soon all their enemies lay dead.

Odysseus then told the servants to carry the bodies to the courtyard, and he made the women wash and clean the hall. When all was clean, they took the servant, Melanthius, and killed him for his treachery. And then they washed themselves, and sent a message to Penelope, asking her to come down to the hall.

The old nurse, Eurycleia, ran to tell Penelope the good news. She hurried into Penelope’s room



and cried: 'Come and see what you have long desired. Odysseus has returned, and all the wicked young men are dead.'

'Surely you are mad to waken me with such a wild story,' Penelope said, but the nurse answered: 'Indeed, it is no silly tale. Odysseus is in the hall. He is that poor beggar whom all men struck and insulted; but Telemachus knew his father.'

Even now, Penelope was not sure whether to believe her old nurse. She was afraid that the beggar might be some god dressed as a man, or some wicked man pretending to be Odysseus. 'Surely Odysseus must have died long ago in some far-off land,' she said sadly.

Eurycleia told her that she herself had seen the hunting scar on his leg, but Penelope was still doubtful. However, she went to the great hall, and sat down opposite Odysseus beside the fire. He was still wearing his beggar's rags and was weary and blood-stained after the fight, and she did not know him. She sat in silence, although Telemachus called her hard-hearted and cruel.

'My child,' she said, 'I am troubled and do not know what to say. But if this man is Odysseus, he knows things unknown to anyone except him and me. I will find some way of testing him.'

Then Odysseus told Telemachus to go to the baths and wash, and put on fresh clothes; and old Eurycleia bathed Odysseus and rubbed his body

with oil. Then she brought new clothes for him and he looked like himself again, full of strength and beauty. He sat down on his own high seat beside the fire, and said to Penelope: 'Lady, I think you are the loveliest and most cruel queen alive. No other woman would harden her heart against her husband, after he had suffered so much danger and misery.' He turned to Eurycleia and cried: 'Nurse, make me a bed in here and I will sleep alone, for her heart is as hard as iron.'

Now Penelope decided to put him to the test. 'Eurycleia,' she said to the nurse, 'put a bed for him outside the bedroom which he built for us



Penelope ran to Odysseus and threw her arms round his neck

when we were married; and bring the good bedstead out of that room for him.'

'How can any man bring out that bedstead?' said Odysseus. 'Did I not make it with my own hands, with a standing tree for the bedpost? No man could move that bed unless he first cut down the tree trunk.'

Then at last Penelope ran to Odysseus and threw her arms round his neck and kissed him. 'Do not be angry with me,' she said. 'I have always feared that some strange man would come and deceive me, pretending to be my husband. But now you have told me the secret of the bed, which no one has ever seen or knows, except you and I and faithful Eurycleia.' They kissed again, and it seemed as if her white arms would never quite leave their hold on his neck.

Odysseus told her all the story of his wanderings, and then they went to their own room, and Eurycleia went before them with lighted torches in her hands. At last the gods had brought them to the peace and happiness they had longed for.

# NOTES AND QUESTIONS

## PART I

### THE SIEGE OF TROY

#### CHAPTER 1

**siege:** when a city is so strongly defended that it cannot be taken by force, the attacking army *besieges* it by camping outside the walls and preventing anyone from entering or leaving the city. In this way, when all their stores of food are finished, the people inside the town must starve or surrender.

1. When Helen chose Menelaus for her husband, what did King Tyndareus make all the other princes promise to do?
2. Why did Priam leave his baby son on Mount Ida? Who found the baby and what name did he give him?
3. Which three goddesses claimed the golden apple, and why did they claim it?
4. To whom did Paris give the apple, and what did she promise him?
5. Why did Paris decide that Helen must be his wife?

#### CHAPTER 2

**giant:** a huge man, two or three times the size of an ordinary man.

**armour:** a protective metal suit covering the body.

**swan:** a very beautiful water bird.

1. We sometimes use the expression 'the heel of Achilles,' meaning that it is the one spot where a person can

be hurt most. Describe in your own words the way in which Thetis made her baby son immortal and explain why we use the above expression.

2. Describe Odysseus's plan to avoid sailing to Troy with the Greek armies. How did the other princes prove that he was not really mad?
3. Why was it doubtful whether Memnon, the King of Ethiopia, would come and fight for the Trojans?
4. Why do the Greeks still call a swan *Cycnus*?

### CHAPTER 3

**sheath:** a protective covering. Soldiers carried a long sheath attached to their belts, into which they could put their swords when they were not using them.

1. Who were Briseis and Chryseis?
2. Why did Apollo send a great sickness to the Greek camp?
3. Why did Achilles quarrel with Agamemnon?
4. Who persuaded Achilles to replace his sword in its sheath? What did she promise him if he did as she asked?

### CHAPTER 4

**truce:** an agreement that both sides shall stop fighting for a certain length of time. It was considered very dishonourable to break a truce, which was a solemn promise.

**helmet:** a metal hat to protect the head in battle.

1. King Priam said to Helen, 'I do not blame you as the cause of this war.' Why did he not blame her?
2. Why was Paris not choked by the strap of his helmet when Menelaus dragged him along the ground?
3. How was Paris saved from death? Where was he taken?

## CHAPTER 5

1. Describe how and why the truce was broken.
2. Describe in your own words the fight between Hector and Ajax. How did it end?

## CHAPTER 6

1. Why did Nestor suggest that Patroclus should borrow Achilles' armour?
2. Who was Sarpedon? Why was Zeus angry with Patroclus for killing him?
3. Why did Patroclus not capture Troy that day?

## CHAPTER 7

1. Describe how Patroclus was killed. Who seized Achilles' armour?
2. What made Achilles decide to fight once more for the Greeks? Why did the goddess Thetis persuade him to wait for one more day?

## CHAPTER 8

1. Why did Hector not enter the gates of Troy with the rest of the Trojan army?
2. Put into reported speech the conversation between Hector and Achilles, just before the former died.
3. Why did Achilles finally allow Hector's body to be taken away by the Trojans for proper burial?

## CHAPTER 9

1. Which king now arrived at Troy to give the Trojans new hope of victory?
2. After he had killed Nestor's son, why did Memnon refuse to fight Nestor himself? Whom did Nestor call to fight Memnon and avenge his son's death?
3. Who shot Achilles at the gates of Troy? Why did the arrow kill the Greek hero?

## CHAPTER 10

**prophecy:** the foretelling of future events.

1. Why did Odysseus and Diomedes go secretly into Troy? Was their visit successful?
2. The wise man, Calchas, told the Greeks that they could only win Troy by trickery and not by force. Describe Odysseus's plan for capturing the city.
3. Who was Sinon? What part did he play in the plan?
4. Why did the Trojans feast so joyfully that night and keep no guard upon their walls?
5. Describe how Troy was captured at last, after ten long years of siege.

PART II  
THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS  
CHAPTER 1

1. Who gave Odysseus the twelve jars of wine, and why did he do so?
2. What happened to the three sailors who went ashore in the land of the Lotus Eaters?
3. Who were the Cyclopes?
4. Describe the scene in the cave that first night after the arrival of the giant. Why did Odysseus not kill the Cyclops as he slept?
5. Tell how Odysseus and his men at last managed to escape from the cave.

CHAPTER 2

**enchantress:** a beautiful woman with magic powers.  
**magic wand:** the stick with which she worked her magic.  
**swine:** pigs.

1. What happened to the party of men who went with Eurylochus to the house in the wood?
2. Whom did Odysseus meet as he went alone through the woods? What did the young man give him, and what did he tell him to do when he reached Circe's house?
3. Why did the sailors at last decide to leave Circe's home?
4. Who were the Sirens? What happened to any man who landed on their island?
5. What did Odysseus do to keep (a) his men, and (b) himself safe from the Sirens' enchantment?



## CHAPTER 3

**whirlpool:** a very dangerous part of the sea, in which the currents swing round in circles and suck everything down into the water.

1. Why did Odysseus tell his soldiers to row close to the rock rather than to the whirlpool?
2. Describe the creature that was hidden in the cave beneath the rock. What happened as the sailors rowed past?
3. Why did Odysseus not want to land on the island of Thrinacia? What did he make his men promise before they landed there?
4. Why did they stay so long on the island and, in the end, become hungry and discontented?
5. What did the sailors do when Odysseus went up the hill to pray to the gods for help? How were they punished?
6. With whom did Odysseus spend the next seven years? What made her at last decide to send him on his way again?

## CHAPTER 4

**armoury:** the room where the armour was kept.

1. What reason did the goddess give for not helping Odysseus in his dangers on the sea?
2. Describe what she did so that no one would recognise him.
3. Tell the story of Penelope's sufferings during Odysseus's absence. Why were the young men so wild, and able to do just as they liked in Ithaca?
4. What instructions did Odysseus give to Telemachus when his son visited him at the swineherd's hut?

## CHAPTER 5

1. Who was Argos? Tell the story of his meeting with Odysseus.
2. What made Penelope feel sure that the old beggar had really met her husband?
3. How did the old nurse, Eurycleia, recognise Odysseus?
4. Penelope at last had promised to marry one of the young men if he was able to do one thing. What was it?

## CHAPTER 6

1. Who succeeded in bending the bow? What did he do next, after he had shot the arrow through the axe-heads?
2. Who helped Odysseus to kill the young men?
3. Why did Penelope continue to doubt whether the old beggar was really her husband? What test did she put to him, and how did he prove the truth to her?



